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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 001690

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PNAT](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: IMPLICATIONS OF SUNNI COALITION SPLIT

REF: A. A) BAGHDAD 1664
[B. B\) BAGHDAD 1623](#)
[C. C\) BAGHDAD 1613](#)
[D. D\) BAGHDAD 1566](#)
[E. E\) BAGHDAD 1484](#)

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Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. The simmering conflict within the Sunni Tawafuq bloc exploded on May 20 when Adb Nasir al-Janabi lead a walkout by about a dozen of the 59 Sunni Arab CoR members during Prime Minister Maliki's presentation of the cabinet (reftel A). The walkout was a manifestation of a long standing leadership struggle among the three Tawafuq leaders. Tarik Hashimi's Iraqi Islamic Party, with 26 of Tawafuq's 44 CoR seats, played a dominant role in government formation talks to the chagrin of its Tawafuq Front partners. The walkout over the nomination of the Defense and Interior Ministers threatened a breakup of the Tawafuq bloc, with Khalaf Alayan's National Dialogue Council (INDC) leaving, perhaps to re-form an alliance with Saleh Mutlak's Hewar. Left unchecked, this split could lead to the INDC and Hewar leaving the parliament as well as the government. Should that occur, Speaker Mahmud Mashadani told us May 21 that he would feel pressured to resign. In the best case, the INDC can be cajoled back into government leaving only Saleh Mutlak in the Sunni Arab political opposition. In the worst case, Mutlak and Alayan will join forces in that opposition, label IIP leaders agents of the occupation, and complicate the efforts of the national unity government to end the insurgency. The Ambassador has been urging Khalaf Alayan to be reasonable in his expectations. End summary.

CoR Walkout Symptom of Deep Division in Tawafuq

[1](#)2. (C) The May 20 walkout by the Iraqi National Dialogue Council as PM Nuri Maliki's government was being voted on (reftel A) was a manifestation of a leadership struggle within the Tawafuq. The long-simmering dispute over which of the three Tawafuq leaders, Tariq al-Hashimi of the Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP), Adnan Dulaymi of the General Conference of the Iraqi People (GCIP) or Sheykh Khalaf Alayan of the Iraqi National Dialogue Council (INDC), spoke for the Sunni Arab "street" has been in the background since the December 15 CoR election (reftels B-E). The tensions exploded on May 20 in the presence of Ambassador Khalilzad (who was attempting to mediate the dispute immediately before the CoR session). Khalaf Alayan, Abd al-Nasir al-Janabi and Hewar's Saleh Mutlaq ganged up on

Adnan Dulaymi and shouted him down. Al-Janabi lost his temper, shouting at Dulaymi "no one appointed you to represent the Sunnis!" Mutlak yelled at Dulaymi that "you stole two of my ministries" and after being asked by Dulaymi to be civil responded "you have not been civil a day in your life." (COMMENT: The significance of this shocking performance cannot be overstated. The public and rude rebuke of the octogenarian Sunni leader broke many taboos and was unacceptable in this culture. Outgoing Prime Minister Ja'fari, also present during the exchange, was visibly stunned. END COMMENT) Al-Janabi pinpointed the nature of the conflict when he fumed "we will never allow the IIP to take over Iraqi Sunni Arabs and bring in imported leaders". (Note: The latter was a reference to IIP's Tariq Hashimi, who spent many years abroad during the Saddam period. It also reminds of the tensions between Iraqi political figures who took refuge abroad and those Iraqis who stayed inside Iraq throughout the Saddam era. End note.)

13. (C) The IIP won 26 of Tawafuq's 44 CoR seats, and with 455 offices around Iraq, has the organization and infrastructure necessary for a political party. Neither Dulaymi's General Conference nor Alayan's National Dialog Council can muster any such organization. Yet the IIP's primacy in the Tawafuq was never accepted by junior partners INDC and GCIP who believe that the Tawafuq owes its popular support to backing from Adnan Dulaymi and Sheykh Khalaf Alayan. Al-Janabi told Poloffs on May 20 that the IIP is "nothing" - "we represent the street and the insurgents." Al-Janabi was still visibly shaken hours after the confrontation with Dulaymi, and had tears in his eyes when he spoke to Poloffs. GCIP leader Hassan Bazzaz blustered to Poloff on May 21 that Sunni Arabs did not know anyone from the IIP list and voted on December 15 for known names like Adnan Dulaymi.

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Tawafuq Partners Unhappy with IIP Leadership -----

14. (C) The specific issue that led to the fallout in Tawafuq was the charge that IIP dominated the negotiations for government positions and did not consult with the other two parties. Abd al-Nasir al-Janabi said on May 20 that the INDC was not consulted on positions. Bazzaz told Poloff on May 21 that the IIP's Ali Baban led the government negotiations for the Tawafuq, and Dulaymi was also not consulted on the ministries. Bazzaz was still angry that on the morning of May 20, Dulaymi had told him that Bazzaz would be Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, a job that went to IIP's Rafia al-Issawi a few hours later. Echoing al-Janabi's sentiment, Bazzaz said the IIP walked away with most of the ministerial slots. Bazzaz said that Dulaymi was also unhappy with the IIP but would not publicly oppose the IIP since they shared the same Muslim Brotherhood roots. Poloff countered that Deputy Prime Minister Salam al-Zawbai was a Dulaymi nominee. Bazzaz laughed and said al-Zawbai is quote 2/3 IIP and 1/3 Dulaymi General Conference end quote and repeated the claim that all the Tawafuq people who got positions were from the IIP.

15. (C) IIP negotiator Ali Baban dismissed their account and told Poloff on May 21 that he consulted with the Tawafuq leaders "from time to time." He said he could not take everyone to the negotiating meetings and he could not make everyone happy. He seemed little concerned about the split within Tawafuq ranks.

----- INDC May Split from Tawafuq -----

16. (C) Janabi announced the withdrawal from the government

on May 20 in the name of Tawafuq though only he and his friends from the National Dialog Council (INDC) actually walked out of the chambers, along with Hewan's Saleh Mutlak and several of his Hewan members. Janabi held out the possibility of re-joining the government but only if Khalaf Alayan becomes Minister of Defense. Poloff May 20 reminded al-Janabi that Mahmud Mashadani, an INDC member, was Speaker of the CoR, a top leadership position. Hassan Bazzaz dismissed al-Janabi's threats and said the INDC was only interested in positions for themselves.

Tough Choice for Mashadani

17. (C) Ahmed Mashadani, the Speaker's son and aide, told Poloff after the CoR session on May 20 that his father had lost a lifetime friend (referring to al-Janabi) when he did not join in the INDC walkout. Mahmud Mashadani later called Poloff May 20 and said that the INDC and Mutlak must be brought back into government. The street is very unhappy, he added. At a May 21 meeting with PolOffs, Mashadani seemed desperate for a "win" that would appeal to the more sectarian elements on the Sunni Arab street. He said that the May 20 session presented a conflict between his heart, which was with his INDC brothers, and his brain, which dictated that the government must be installed. He said that if the Sunni Arab leaders in office failed to satisfy their constituency, new leaders would emerge to replace them. Mashadani pleaded for USG support for Shaykh Khalaf Alayan as Defense Minister, arguing that it would be fair exchange for the Shia Islamist Coalition putting "a killer" like Bayan Jabr into the Finance Ministry. He remained silent when PolOff said that both the Defense and Interior Ministries should be led by competent professionals with cross-sectarian credibiliy. Mashadani further argued that Alayan would have greater motivation and ability than any other candidate to mobilize support in his native Anbar against foreign fighters and terrorists. He charged that Sunni Arabs were fearful of the presence of around a dozen "Iranian agents" among parliament and alleged that Minister of State Hasan Radhi al-Sari also took his orders from Tehran.

18. (C) Abd al-Nasir al-Janabi claimed Poloff on May 20 that Mashadani was told to stay in the government for now and that is why he did not join the boycott. (Comment: Based on what Mashadani and his son said immediately after the session, al-Janabi's assertion was likely an attempt to save face. But should the walkout not be resolved, and if the INDC remains out of government, Mashadani will face more pressure from his own immediate political allies to resign the Speaker's post. End comment.) Mashadani said on May 21 that he being asked why he is not with his brothers - even being accused of being an American agent.

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IIP Not Concerned

19. (C) Poloff asked IIP negotiator Ali Baban on May 21 what the IIP was doing to resolve the conflict. Baban said that the IIP hoped to resolve the situation within a few days - "if we get to nominate Defense and Interior." He said that Tariq al-Hashimi called Khalaf Alayan late on May 20 and other meetings were held with IIP and INDC leaders. Khalaf will come back into to government, Baban predicted. He will eventually see that he will have to work with the IIP, he concluded.

Comment

¶10. (C) The tensions within Tawafuq reflect the intensity of competition among Sunni Arab leaders for popular support within the relatively narrow base of Iraq's Sunni Arab population. The Tawafuq split could have consequences for the national unity government's ability to reduce Sunni Arab support for the insurgency. While Alayan, al-Janabi and their colleagues in the parliament are only seven in number, all come from the "hot" Sunni areas of Anbar, Baghdad and north Babil. A breakup within the bloc could leave Tarik al-Hashimi and the IIP are vulnerable to attack of having sold out to the "occupation". Mutlak in opposition alone (we expect that most of his Hewar CoR members will join Tawafuq) is inconvenient but manageable - especially if the government acts to stem sectarian violence and government human rights abuses. Mutlak re-joining forces with Khalaf's INDC, and perhaps leaving not just the government but also the parliament, would be more problematic. The Ambassador has met several times with Khalaf Alayan and his allies to urge them to be reasonable in their expectations and accept compromises. Moreover, we can mitigate the negatives by helping Sunni Arab leaders in the government demonstrate the advantage of their participation to their constituents. Part of this will be working to ensure the new government takes concrete steps on de-Ba'athification, investigation of human rights abuses, a tough stance on militias and other measures to promote national reconciliation.

KHALILZAD